

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1663
USDOC, WASHDC
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE
AMCONSUL TURIN
U.S. TRADE CENTER MILAN
AMCONSUL TANGIER

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, IT
SUBJ: COMMERCIAL OFFICERS' CONFERENCE: SUMMARY REPORT

REF: A. ROME 3836, B. ROME 4942, C. USIA CM-106

SUMMARY. ON MARCH 13 AMCONSULATE FLORENCE HOSTED A FULL DAY MEETING OF COMMERCIAL OFFICERS IN ITALY; SELECTED LOCAL COMMERCIAL STAFF FROM POSTS OTHER THAN HOST CITY WERE ALSO INVITED. FULL RANGE OF COMMERCIAL ISSUES AND DETAILED PLANS FOR FY-1979 (INCLUDING COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM ACTIONS) WERE DISCUSSED. REF (B) NOTES CHANGES SUGGESTED AT CONFERENCE IN FY-79 CCP DRAFT. FOLLOWING ARE OTHER REQUESTS FOR WASHINGTON ACTION WHICH WERE AGREED ON IN FLORENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. USIA SUPPORT FOR COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS. WE ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RECENT USIA AIRGRAM, APPROVED BY STATE AND USDOC, WHICH
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ATTEMPTED TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE (REF C). RATHER THAN THE DEFINITIVE STATEMENT WE HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT, THIS PAPER IS MERELY A LIST OF POSSIBLE AREAS OF COOPERATION COUPLED WITH A VAGUE INDICATION THAT THESE PROGRAMS MAY CONTINUE; IT ADDS THAT ANY REAL DECISIONS ARE "BEST LEFT TO THE PAO AND ECONOMIC COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO DETERMINE THROUGH MUTUAL DISCUSSIONS." THIS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE IMPRESSION LEFT BY THE STATE

COMMERCE TEAM THAT VISITED ROME IN LATE FEBRUARY, NAMELY THAT STATE AND USDOC HAD PREVAILED ON USIA TO CONTINUE SUPPORT. THE USIA AIRGRAM LEAVES US EXACTLY WHERE WE WERE BEFORE; USIS LOCALLY PULLING OUT OF OUR JOINT EFFORT. OUR FOCUS IS THE COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTER, SCAMBI COMMERCIALI, THE COSTS FOR WHICH USIS HAS HERETOFORE PAID HALF; USIS NOW INTENDS TO DROP ALL SUPPORT BEGINNING IN FY-79. ACTION REQUESTED: IT WAS THE SENSE OF THE MEETING THAT THE PRESENT SCAMBI IS AN EXCELLENT FORMAT AND "CALLING CARD" FOR THE MISSION'S COMMERCIAL EFFORTS, AS WELL AS A VEHICLE FOR TIMELY ARTICLES ON U.S. TECHNOLOGY. STATE AND USDOC SHOULD RECONSIDER THIS ISSUE AND SEEK TO PERSUADE USIA IN WASHINGTON TO TAKE A MORE FORTHRIGHT POSITION IN SUPPORTING JOINT EFFORTS, SUCH AS THE SCAMBI.

2. REVERSE INVESTMENT. THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY INCREASE IN REQUESTS FROM ITALIAN S ABOUT DIRECT INVESTMENT IN THE U.S., AND WE ARE RECEIVING REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM A GROWING NUMBER OF REVERSE INVESTMENT MISSIONS SPONSORED BY VARIOUS STATE DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES. GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON ON REVERSE INVESTMENT IS RELATIVELY VAGUE. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE REVIEW OF EXISTING GUIDELINES AND MORE DETAILED GUIDANCE ON PROMOTION OF REVERSE INVESTMENT, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF OUR CURRENT BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION.

3. MARKET RESEARCH. ALL OF OUR CONSTITUTENT POSTS AGREED THAT COPIES OF MARKET STUDIES, I.E. COUNTRY MARKET SURVEYS, PRODUCED UNCLASSIFIED

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IN ITALY WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO HAVE ON HAND. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES HENCEFORTH FOR ALL POSTS IN ITALY.

4. FSL SEMINARS. MILAN AND OTHER POSTS ARE EXPERIENCING A LARGER THAN USUAL FSL TURNOVER. A SPECIAL TRAINING EFFORT SEEMS IN ORDER. ACTION REQUESTED: IF ANOTHER FSL SEMINAR HAS NOT BEEN SCHEDULED SOON FOR EUROPE, WE RECOMMEND THAT ONE SHOULD BE.

5. CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN. WE HAVE EXPERINCED SOME DIFFICULTY LATELY WITH ITALIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS REJECTING CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN ISSUED BY CERTAIN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN THE U.S. WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN PROPERLY REGISTERED WITH THE APPROPRIATE ITALIAN CONSULATE. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT USDOC CHECK INTO THIS MATTER, AND, PERHAPS, REQUEST SELECTED DISTRICT OFFICES ON THE EAST COAST TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT LOCAL U.S. CHAMBERS ARE IN FACT REGISTERED.

6. MATERIAL FOR COMMERCIAL NEWSLETTERS. WE STILL CONSISTENTLY LACK GOOD THEMATIC ARTICLES AND PHOTOS TIED TO CCP CAMPAIGNS FOR SCAMBI; WE ALWAYS HAVE MATERIAL ON COMPUTERS, BUT NOT MUCH ON OTHER INDUSTRIAL GROUPS. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT USDOC ESTABLISH A BETTER SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING TIMELY MATERIAL FOR COMMERCIAL

NEWSLETTERS.

7. OTHER OBSERVATIONS.

A. ILLOGIC OF THE CCP. AMONG THE MANY PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THE FORMAT OF THE COUNTRY COMMERCIAL PROGRAM IS THE INADEQUACY OF THE SO-CALLED "PERSONNEL RESOURCE LIST". AS THIS EMBASSY HAS INDICATED PREVIOUSLY (77 ROME 20835), THE CCP LISTS ALL ECONOMIC-COMMERCIAL PERSONNEL AS THE "PERSONNEL RESOURCE", BUT SETS FORTH A PROGRAM DEALING WITH COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS ONLY. THUS, SEVERAL ECONOMIC OFFICERS, WHO DEVOTE LITTLE OR NO TIME TO COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS ARE A "RESOURCE", WHILE AT THE SAME TIME, STATE-FUNDED TRADE CENTER PERSONNEL, WHO SPEND 100 PERCENT OF THEIR TIME ON TRADE PROMOTION, ARE NOT A "RESOURCE". SUGGESTION: AS A FIRST STEP TOWARD MAKING THE CCP A MORE USEFUL MANAGEMENT TOOL, WE

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URGE THAT THE "PERSONNEL RESOURCE LIST" BE REVISED TO MORE ACCURATELY REFLECT THE REAL WORLD.

B. TRADE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM. AS INDICATED REF (B), WE HAVE FOUND THE TOP PROGRAM NOT PARTICULARLY SUITABLE FOR MOST OF THE SOPHISTICATED PRODUCT AREAS IN THE CCP. WE SUSPECT THAT THIS JUDGMENT IS VALID FOR MOST STATE-OF-THE-ART INDUSTRIES IN DEVELOPED MARKETS. THE LIMITED NUMBER OF ADVANCED PRODUCT CATEGORIES ADEQUATELY COVERED BY U.S. SUPPLIERS AND THE UNSOPHISTICATED RESPONSES MOST OFTEN GENERATED SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THE TOP SYSTEM AS PRESENTLY ORGANIZED IS BEST AIMED AT EMERGENT MARKETS. SUGGESTION: OUR FEELING IS THAT THE EFFORT IN DEVELOPED MARKETS DEVOTED TO CUSTOMARY TO'S SHOULD BE LIMITED TO RESPONSIVE ACTIVITY, I.E., FULFILLING REQUESTS. THE BULK OF TO'S SHOULD BE "SPECIAL HANDLING". WE ASSUME COMMERCE IS ALREADY INJECTING THE TO'S TURNED UP BY THE FOREIGN BUYER PROGRAM INTO EITHER THE AUTOMATED TOP SYSTEM OR THE SPECIAL HANDLING TO PROGRAM.

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